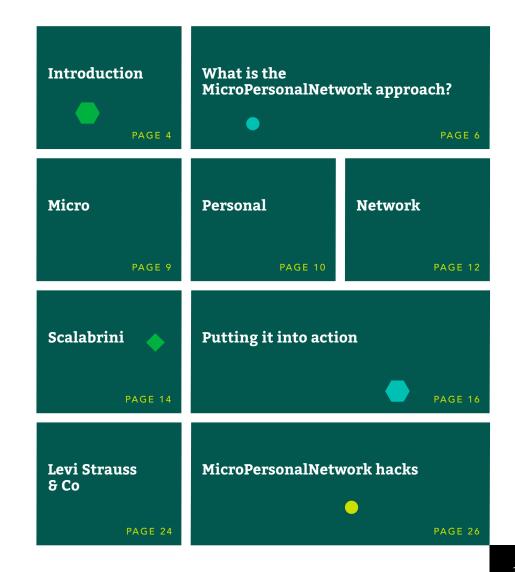
### Let's get micropersonal

#MicroPersonalNetworks



### Contents



### Introduction

In our latest **Learning Insights research** we explored the idea of MicroPersonalNetworks – how learners want to engage with their learning in a way that's short, sharp, personalised and social.

### Why MicroPersonalNetworks?

Employees are sending out a clear message they are motivated to learn as long as they trust it will clearly benefit their jobs and their careers, provided it's easy to access, and if they can shape it to their particular needs. None of this should come as a surprise.

If we assume most people are comfortable and adept at using technology in their personal lives from smartphones to Google searches and social media, it should be no revelation that they're equally comfortable personalising their workbased training and/or receptive to adaptive technology.

And no bombshell that they're happy with a social dimension where they can network and learn socially with colleagues and community. Nor should we be astonished that employees have an expectation that content is multiformat, multi-device and easy to access any time, any place. 79% of employees would like to see a bigger focus on training and people development



But to what extent is this happening in the world of work-based learning? And how tuned in to this opportunity are employers?

When asked about the training needs of the future, employers predicted that elearning/online courses (36%) will become more important in the next three to five years, as well as personal learning programmes (28%).



### **59%**

of employees said that the current training content they receive is not always exciting or engaging



of employees say they currently have trouble accessing L&D activity in their workplace

This fits well with what employees said they wanted - more on-the-job training (27%), external events (25%) and expert coaching (25%) going forward.

But what will this all look like? What are the implications for employers and learning designers of delivering a MicroPersonalNetwork approach that matches employee expectations? In this guide, we hope to come up with some answers as well as share ideas and tips for implementing the MicroPersonalNetwork approach in your own organisation's learning.

### What is the MicroPersonalNetwork approach?

It's more of a mindset than a prescriptive approach. It means respecting and making the most of today's employee expectations, especially around technology. It means moving away from the traditional teacher-pupil relationship and pedagogy that still informs much workbased training provision.

It also, crucially, and arguably most controversially, means relinquishing control in the sense of monitoring and tracking what has constituted "completion". Where compliance is concerned, there will still have to be tests and assessments, but does the SCORM wrapper have to apply to the content that leads up to those assessments? And is there any need for tracking when it comes to everything else?

MICROPERSONALNETWORK LEARNING = A PRINCIPLE TO DELIVER HIGHLY RELEVANT LEARNING THAT PEOPLE WILL ACTUALLY DO "Micro" refers to content in the sense of it being more targeted, flexible and adaptable in terms of its scale and duration; it also means multi-format, multi-device.

# MICRO

Personal

"Personal" talks more of what you can do with micro, multi-format, multi-device content to make it suit your particular needs and preferences; it embraces the idea of self-directed learning, without excluding curricula and guidance, and facilitates selfmotivated learning, for example, beyond the immediate workplace, a trend identified in the research.

NETW

"Network" is about the social learning dimension, it may complement formal learning such as microlearning, it may be social learning as a wrap-around or a continuation of other learning experiences, virtual classrooms for example, as part of a blend. It can be to do with a community of colleagues and the immediate support, help and problem-solving they can bring. And it can be about informal, user-generated content which is shared freely, and rated by peers in terms of its value and veracity. So the network turns into the ultimate goal when it becomes self-sufficient, self-generating, and selfmoderating in much the same way as successful sites such as Stack Overflow work, and which some pioneering blue chip businesses are achieving.

MICRO

**'PART OF THE ISSUE FOR L&D IS LETTING GO, GIVING UP CONTROL OVER WHAT THEY THINK EMPLOYEES KNOW AND DON'T KNOW AND THE BEST WAY TO MAKE SURE THEY KNOW IT.** 

IF YOU ASSIGN COURSES TO PEOPLE AND TRACK THAT ON AN LMS YOU HAVE NOTIONAL VISIBILITY OF THEIR ACHIEVEMENT AND COMPLIANCE.

ALLOWING PEOPLE UNFETTERED ACCESS TO CURATED CONTENT FOR EXAMPLE, AND TO INFORMAL LEARNING, IS A MASSIVE CHANGE IN MINDSET FOR MANY IN L&D.'

> James Cory-Wright, Head of Learning Design, Kineo

### Micro

From here on in, when there's new content needed, maybe think about it as being delivered as microlearning. Where a larger chunk of learning may have several learning objectives, each piece of microlearning can relate to a discrete outcome or goal that stands alone in its own right but is relatable to other microlearns.

Microlearning is all about quick, high impact learning delivered to meet the needs of time-poor learners. It's not just bite-sized pieces of content – it's learning that delivers just the right amount of information necessary for a learner to deliver a specific, actionable objective. Think of Googling a Youtube video on 'how to change a tyre', and you're there.

Remember, you should only have one objective for each single 'microlearn', and in order to achieve an overall goal - for example, improving customer service – employees might engage with 25-50 over the course of six months.

You can implement microlearning directly on your learning management system (LMS), where each 'microlearn' is SCORM wrapped, and either stands alone and is useful in its own right, or can be grouped with other microlearns. Technology like xAPI and learning record stores (LRSs) have freed up learning designers to get more creative with delivery, allowing tracking to take place outside the LMS. Microlearning reflects the demands and preferences of today's employees who are likely to be:

- short on time, so they expect immediacy and up-to-date content
- sophisticated and active online consumers of media with high expectations in terms of visuals and a quick and easy user experience (UX)
- overloaded with information
- receptive to content they see up front as being relevant, useful, stripped back and to the point.

By the same token, microlearning is an opportunity to think of new ways of using curated content from lots of different sources. By combining information from multiple authors and sites, a video clip, a pdf, a webpage or existing e-learning into a test, you can assess learners' knowledge and comprehension of the curated content.

### Personal

What it says on the tin. Above all, personalising learning means making learning genuinely easy to access, available in a variety of formats from video to text, and where possible suited to all devices. This means learners receive a personalised learning experience, either guided or self-selected, that reflects their specific needs.

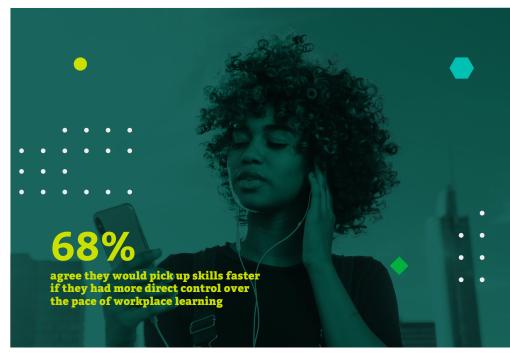
This open, unfettered access to the content they want is the first step in enabling employees to personalise their learning. This does not need to exclude curricula, guidance, study guides, or playlists, but the emphasis is on the individual making choices.

"Personalised learning" is a term that can be used to refer to the use of AI algorithms to adapt learning content based on an individual's needs, so that it moves them through key learning points at their own speed. Equally, it can cover access to full libraries of L&D content where users can self-serve, going in to find the information and support that they want at the point of need.

Both approaches are relevant to the modern workplace and this is corroborated in our research, where employees across the world called for more self-direction over their L&D experience; 71% would prefer to choose



would prefer to choose when and where they undertake training



when and where they undertake training and 68% agree they would pick up skills faster if they had more direct control over the pace of workplace learning.

When we talk about personalising learning, it's important to understand that we're still talking about this within a framework. Learning must work for learners and employers – both engaging learners and ultimately delivering the outcomes the organisation needs. Outlining how a piece of learning or an objective links to the individual and their real-life experience and role does a lot to bring the learning to life for them and make it relevant. You can do this in a variety of ways:

- highlighting content that 'users like you' enjoyed or found useful
- creating guided stories through the eyes of different learner personas
- using AI to personalise learning journeys.

### Network

Learning doesn't take place in a bubble - it's very unusual for learners to be in a cohort of one. Social learning has been proven to help embed learning aims more effectively, and the MicroPersonalNetwork approach capitalises on the strengths of organisational community by enabling a social aspect to learning from the start.

By establishing and encouraging learning 'networks' across your organisation, whether that's virtually or face-to-face meet-ups (or a combination of both), you're creating a space for learners to swap ideas, discuss concepts and share real-life examples of how they're applying learning in the workplace.

Social learning is an active process of knowledge acquisition where we learn through our own personal agency. As such, we interact and contribute to our environment, playing an active role in sharing and acquiring knowledge and insight, rather than being a mere sponge soaking up the actions going on around us.

Microlearning and social learning have a lot in common - they're both bite-sized, easily accessible and more personal. They take place outside the traditional learning formats, at the point of need. Both valuable tools in their own right, their combined power is greater still. Mix up their features to make the experience more interesting - get people talking about or rating your microlearning; ask them to share their stories, work aids; provide forums to answer their questions and keep the conversations going.

Although social technologies do underpin most modern workplace learning, technology alone will not generate the behaviours and culture that will ensure learning through social collaboration is a self-sustaining reality. That will require effort, planning and knowledge from an L&D community willing and able to facilitate growth.

L&D and learning design teams act as facilitators for this process, building, seeding and promoting the structures or networks to allow these interactions to occur naturally, and around the themes and topics to which the business gives most focus.



Networks can take a number of forms, whether it's face-to-face contact with mentors and co-workers or digital networks that use the power of social media to share ideas and build virtual communities – particularly relevant for dispersed workforces where your peers may not be local to you.

These networks help not only to contextualise learning, but also provide a trusted support base to help people determine the direction their learning should head next. The role of the L&D function is not only to create great formal education, but also to deliver a tapestry of everchanging learning experiences that can be curated by the crowd.

### What underpins social learning?

- We constantly and actively learn from our day-to-day experiences
- We like to actively engage socially and collaboratively with others
- We recognise that structured, formal learning has a place

### Scalabrini

We provide aged care across six facilities and have about 1000 staff in total to look after residents and volunteers who work alongside pastoral staff.

Our organisation has recently gone through a period of change when it comes to L&D with a big shift towards more online learning for compliance training and CPD. Additional face-toface specialist training (e.g palliative care; dementia care) is delivered by practice leads who travel to the different sites.

This change was instigated by our CEO based on her experiences elsewhere – she had seen the benefits of flexibility, not having to back-fill rosters to cover training and the engagement you get from allowing people to study at their own pace around their schedules. It was a modernisation that was waiting to happen.

A lot of our needs and skills training are fairly straightforward but we do have to consider the individual needs of our learners and, in particular, any issues that they might have accessing the learning. Computer literacy or language skills can cause difficulties for many of our staff. Computers are not a feature in most care home jobs and staff are not allowed to use mobile phones as we want them interacting with our residents rather than looking at screens. They have access to laptops in an education room at each facility but about half of our staff prefer to do their training (both mandatory or voluntary) at home in their own time.

There will always be some people that you need to chase to do any training but many of our staff genuinely want to learn. They will jump on the LMS, do their mandatory training and then go on to select the optional CPD courses they feel they need. The quick, direct, in-time personalised learning opportunities that it provides encourage reflection without the fear of making a fool of yourself in front of others.

When commissioning new programmes, we work with subject matter experts internally to create stories and simulate the thought processes and behaviours that we want to see from our staff. Building in follow up by supervisors helps to promote the accountability of the learning. For each project, we will assess results, look at success measures and then feed this back into the next iteration.

When you make something fun, it is successful. You can have more fun face-toface with the right facilitator who knows their stuff and is comfortable in front of a crowd of people – you can make memories which makes lasting learning. It's possible to do that online as well but online learning is a much more personal thing - building people's confidence to be autonomous learners is the best way to achieve that.

Jamie Burgess, Learning & Development Consultant, Scalabrini Village Ltd "



### Putting it into action

Taking a MicroPersonalNetwork approach to learning means some adjustment to thinking if you're still wedded to a traditional course model, but with increasing pressures to deliver ROI on training, the impacts could be huge.

The challenge for organisations is two-fold – firstly, they must deliver learning experiences that work for both learners and organisations. The key for any business is to have a clear set of goals and outcomes that allow them to measure the success of any learning.

Secondly, employers need to keep a firm eye on the metrics, not just when designing content but on an ongoing basis to make sure that it's being used and achieving what they need it to. A robust process of iterating and refining the learning that is offered is essential to enable employers to keep on top of learner needs and progress.

We've outlined four things to consider when bringing your design in line with a MicroPersonalNetwork approach.



### D Move content from courses to micro, multi-format, multi-device

Moving away from the traditional course-based model to a more personalised approach takes careful planning, but you can still follow a similar process to creating learning content as before.

### Create

Design effective learning sequences by first scoping the challenge or reason for delivering training. What you want to achieve may well dictate your design – are you delivering information and knowledge, improving skills like communication or sales, or driving behaviour and attitude change?

You can approach the learning design of each piece of microlearning on offer using traditional models like PEET (present, exemplify, explore, text) but branch out into using non-traditional formats like video and audio to deliver information much faster and more effectively. You can also mix up the order of your PEET elements – start with a test to assess skill levels, then allow access to further pieces of content to follow up with exemplify, explore and presentation. **"WE CAN LEARN LESSONS FROM THE TECHNOLOGIES THAT ARE USED TO PERSONALISE SOCIAL MEDIA AND SHOPPING, SECTORS WHICH ARE WAY AHEAD OF L&D IN TERMS OF RECOMMENDATIONS, NUDGES ETC. NETFLIX CONCEPTS LIKE PLAYLISTS ARE ALSO STARTING TO EMERGE."** 

**James Ballard,** Value Propositions Manager, City & Guilds Group

For example, to achieve the desired outcome, one learner might engage with four pieces of content – a test to ascertain skill levels, an interactive video, a blog which they comment on and a downloadable guide; while another learner may engage with all 20 pieces of content you've made available. However, the desired outcome for both will remain the same – but the MicroPersonalNetwork approach means that those with more experience, knowledge and skills can progress to the objective faster.

### Curate

Make the most of any existing learning resources available inside and outside the organisation. These may be useful in their own right, or as part of a blend for any given topic.

Instead of simply designing a solution from scratch, it is a more flexible and cost-effective model that attempts to make the most of proven existing learning resources within a blend.

Content curation is an ongoing process (as there is always good content out there) but at the start it means putting together a specific programme

that needs to be carefully linked to competencies - searching and selecting useful resources from a mix of informal and formal sources

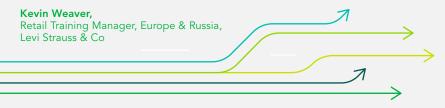
The next task then is to assemble these resources within the overall blend. Providing context and filters ensures learners can get the best out of learning content that may not have been designed directly for their needs.

The resources curation phase of designing a blend is a step-by-step process focused on meeting the agreed objectives of the overall programme.



A feature of learning design that modifies the experience to each learner's preferences and experiences, adaptive technology tailors the path a learner takes according to their skill level, preferences and more. For example - if a learner is asked to answer a question, with an Adaptive Learning approach their answer will determine the next piece of information that they will see. In this way, the experience adapts to what the learner already knows how to do. Adaptive Learning solutions literally learn about the learner as they move through the course, offering each individual a fully personalised experience.

**"WE USE AN ONLINE QUIZ-BASED PLATFORM THAT HELPS HIGHLIGHT KNOWLEDGE GAPS, PROVIDES** IMMEDIATE FEEDBACK AND DELIVERS ADAPTIVE LEARNING. THE OUESTIONS THAT USERS GET DAY DAY DEPEND ON HOW THEY ANSWERED PREVIOUS DAY'S QUESTIONS. IT MEANS THAT WHEN YOU LAUNCH A NEW LEARNING MODULE, EVERYONE STARTS IT IN THE SAME PLACE. BUT EVEN BY DAY **2 YOU WILL FIND THAT PEOPLE ARE ON DIFFERENT** IS BECAUSE OF THEIR RESPONSES IOUS DAY AND SO IT FEELS PERSONALISED FOR EVERYONE."



Kineo's approach to resources curation

Refine the Search Search Aggregate Selection Re on the back we then next, we filter ble of a skills/ collate them content on we knowledge into categories the basis you analysis, we related to the of quality, ou trawl through topics with relevance, of all available ratings and and ease of CO sh content comments integration (Learning inc (Explorer) (Librarian) designer) ho applied within

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#### LET'S GET MICROPERSONAL



All learning built with a MicroPersonalNetwork approach still needs to achieve the organisation's desired outcome – whether that's improving customer service, ensuring compliance or upgrading product knowledge. The way you deliver it, however, it up for grabs.

### Be creative with content types. We've suggested a few here:

- TED-style talks in person and on video
- Through my eyes a 'day in the life' video
- Audio panel discussions
- Quizzes
- Buzzfeed-style lists and graphics
- Interactive video
- Animation

However, personalisation is not just about content types - it is also about making learning accessible so people can consume it in a way that works for them – whether that's in the middle of the night, during daylight hours, or on their commute.

Personalisation is also about making learning feel relevant for the individual – again, moving away from that one-sizefits-all approach to make content feel more bespoke. Outlining exactly how this content is relevant to the individual, showing the impacts and benefits up front, creates greater buy-in, better engagement and improves learning completion. "THE LAST THING LEARNING SHOULD BE IS RESTRICTIVE! SO AS WELL AS BEING ABLE TO ACCESS IT EASILY, WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO DIP IN AND OUT, AND NOT NECESSARILY NEED TO SET ASIDE HOURS TO ACHIEVE ANYTHING (COMPLETELY UNREALISTIC WHEN, ACCORDING TO RECENT RESEARCH, THE AVERAGE PERSON HAS 9 MINUTES TO LEARN A WEEK). SMALL CHUNKS CAN BUILD INTO BIGGER LEARNINGS."

> Candice Gardner, Education Manager – Digital and Content, Dermalogica

"IF PEOPLE HAVE A CLEAR IDEA ABOUT WHAT WILL BE COVERED AND WHAT THE OUTCOME WILL BE – EVEN BETTER IF IT'S THE IMPACT IT WILL HAVE IN THEIR DAY TO DAY – TRAINING IS INVARIABLY CONSIDERED MORE EFFECTIVE, AND THEREFORE WORTHWHILE."

Candice Gardner, Education Manager – Digital and Content, Dermalogica

## 4 Build in networks

Adding a social or network aspect into learning design up front doesn't just deliver greater impact in embedding learning, it can also generate new ideas and innovation. Networks provide a space for employees to share best practice, a clinic-like environment for challenges or queries and a forum for discussion. This can be both on and offline, and has best impact as part of a blend.

It's a 'people first, tools second' approach to networks. First, recognise any established collaborative networks that are willing to actively work together. Building a collective body of knowledge and experience requires individual effort; it doesn't just happen, whatever we say about learning in the flow of work.

Next, create new patterns of behaviours through supportive intervention. Whether that's through your LMS or LXP or via a range of media and devices to build a 'sense' of community, i.e. photo sharing, storytelling, virtual or real team and individual coaching.

And it doesn't have to all occur offline or in-platform. You can use existing social tools that are already embedded in the business, like Teams or Slack, to support the call to action from a piece of learning. Building on existing best practice, you can use the system to your advantage and as a result deliver demonstrable results for the team whilst contributing to the wider organisation's targets and goals. "FUNDAMENTALLY, THE CONCEPT OF LEARNING HAS NEVER CHANGED AND WON'T - IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN A SOCIAL EXPERIENCE AS YOU TEND TO LEARN THINGS FROM SOMEONE ELSE, WHETHER THAT IS FACE-TO-FACE, SOMEONE CAPTURED IN A VIDEO OR TALKING TO OTHERS ABOUT HOW WE DO OUR JOBS."

> **James Ballard,** Value Propositions Manager, City & Guilds Group

"NETWORKS ARE SO IMPORTANT TO US AND BUILDING PERSONAL HUMAN CONNECTION. WE WORK HARD TO FOSTER THIS COMMUNITY IN PERSON AND DURING VIRTUAL SESSIONS AS IT HELPS INDIVIDUALS UNDERSTAND THE WIDER INDUSTRY RELEVANCE AND VALUE OF ENGAGING IN ONE TRAINING PROGRAMME OR ANOTHER, AND ALSO PROVIDES A LEARNING OPPORTUNITY IN ITSELF THROUGH THESE SHARED EXPERIENCES."

Candice Gardner, Education Manager – Digital and Content, Dermalogica

### Levi Strauss & Co

Shift patterns, part-time employees and transient workers can make scheduling training in the retail world challenging. Therefore, we realised small bite-sized, easily accessible, easily digestible learning is the best way to get people engaging with the business whilst also improving their life skills.

We ask store staff to do 3-5 minutes of training at the start of every shift. We use an online quiz-based platform that helps highlight knowledge gaps, provides immediate feedback and delivers adaptive learning.

The questions that users get day-today depend on how they answered the previous day's questions. It means that when you launch a new learning module, everyone starts it in the same place but by Day 2 you will find that people are on different paths because of their responses the previous day and so it feels personalised for everyone.

In addition to the daily quiz-based training, we are also building up a self-help library – bite-size modules and deeper reading on a subject so that people can search for content to address any specific issues that they have noticed.

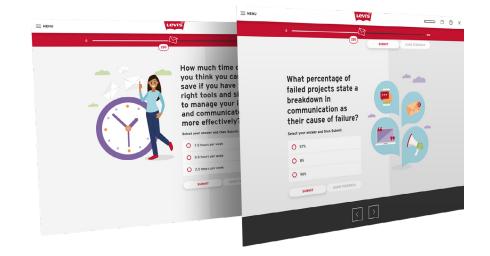
No elearning can be a complete solution, especially when the target

of that learning is to improve human interaction. So we also provide coaching in stores to help embed the behaviour that we want our store staff to display.

It's easier from a retail perspective to link L&D activity to business goals because we have clearly defined retail targets. The overriding one is revenue, but you can break that down further like the ability to convert someone who walks into a store into a consumer, the ability to sell multiple products to a single customer or the ability to upsell to more premium products.

When designing training, we start with the sales targets and use these in combination with insights from both district managers and staff working on the shop floor to identify learning needs. We consider not just the outcomes but also try to analyse the root cause of any problems we are trying to address. We are now seeing some real traction with this training approach – once a store has decided to engage with the training, it is continual and requires very little following-up or pushing. It really proves that when you get training right, it's very well accepted. The key has been getting the correct formula for our audience.

**Kevin Weaver,** Retail Training Manager, Europe & Russia, Levi Strauss & Co



## HACKS

### MicroPersonalNetwork

So we know what MicroPersonalNetwork learning means and why we need to think about it in the ways we deliver and design our learning content. But what practical steps can you take to make this a part of your organisation's learning?

#### **Build playlists**

Netflix for learning? Yes, please! Allow users to build playlists of content they'd like to engage with in the future and share them across their networks. Pick a playlist from users with similar interests and off you go.

#### If you liked this, you might like...

Use AI and reviews of course content from other users to recommend content to the learner feels like real personalisation.



#### Use insights

When building course content, use insights like business objectives and behavioural observation to understand the root causes of a problem. This will result in a more complete learning solution that addresses all issues, not just the ones you think you have.

#### Social functionality

If you're using a platform-based solution for all or part of your learning, build in a social aspect as standard. And if you aren't, consider other options already embedded in the business to drive social discussion – like Slack, Teams or Facebook Groups.

#### App-like delivery

Not all microlearning needs to go via an LMS, and with xAPI and enhanced tracking via solutions like Learning Locker, you can deliver bitesize chunks of learning through solutions like an app.

#### Give it a nudge

Some learning programmes have used 'nudges' really effectively – essentially, push notifications for learning, driving users back to your content.



#### Multi-media

Podcasts, panel discussions, quizzes, games, videos, animation, interactive video – build a variety of content to engage all types of learners.

#### Get gamification right

It might have been around for a while, but few organisations are getting gamification right. Gamification is, in the simplest terms, the practice of turning something non-competitive into a game or adding game-like elements to an experience. It's used really well in fitness, with people able to "compete" daily to see who has achieved the highest step count or logged the most workouts, after which they receive digital badges. Adding gamification elements to microlearning may make the experience more fun for the learner and add an element of extrinsic (external) motivation so people want to complete the learning, earn their points, and move on to the next challenge.



#### Adaptive learning

Use a quiz-based platform to highlight skills needs and knowledge gaps and delivers adaptive learning – a kind of 'choose your own adventure' style of learning delivery. So while 50 users might start a new module on the same day, by day 3 they could be on completely different paths and be interacting with different content.

#### User-generated content

TED-style talks, selfie videos, blogs – allow users to share their own content, which creates not only more engagement with the topic, but also a space for innovation and peer-to-peer learning.



#### Tweet ups

Create a space for networks to discuss learning – whether that's in a forum, a weekly Twitter chat under a hashtag, a closed Facebook Group, or on your own platform. Let them share ideas and ask questions.

#### Are you taking a #MicroPersonalNetwork approach? Share your hacks with us @Kineo

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## Discover how we're shaping the future of learning

Everything we do at Kineo stems from a simple idea – if we design a better learning experience, together we'll get better results.

Kineo helps the world's leading businesses improve performance through learning and technology. We're proud of our reputation for being flexible and innovative, and of our award-winning work with clients across the world.

Whatever your business challenge, we will partner with you every step of the way to find the learning solution that fits best – and delivers results. So, how can we help you?





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